

COLLEGE HEIGHTS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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RE: SB 416

Dear Delegate Peace:

The College Heights Civic Association, Inc. (ID 04006334) in Fredericksburg, Virginia would like to go on record as supporting the individual localities' rights to establish their own policies regulating Short Term Rentals such as Airbnb properties. We believe that preemption of local zoning violates many protections residents across the state expect, in order to preserve the character of their neighborhoods, and would deny basic public safety protections.

College Heights is a residential neighborhood adjacent to The University of Mary Washington. Living in a college town imposes certain stresses on our neighborhoods due to student housing, an unusually high amount of rental properties and inadequate parking. We are certain that unregulated short term rentals would have a further negative impact on homeowners in general in our beautiful city and would disallow any local oversight or recourse should problems occur and something badly go wrong.

The City of Fredericksburg has established short term lodging policy that seems reasonable, fair and effective and is designed to meet the needs of our unique community. It would seem prudent and logical for this to be allowed to continue here and in all the other unique areas that make up the State of Virginia.

We are pleased that this issue is now under extensive scrutiny and consideration by the Virginia Housing Commission and would ask again that our lawmakers fully understand our desire that localities reserve the ability to regulate Short Term Rentals, as only local governments fully understand the complexities of their own jurisdictions and the resulting impacts on residents, business owners and visitors, not to mention the extensive fiscal implications.

Respectfully submitted,

Meredith M. Beckett, President
College Heights Civic Association